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Adapting to a changing climate

14 February 2008

The Met Office is hosting a series of workshops to explore the impacts an increasingly warm climate will have on animal and plant health in the decades ahead.

Defra, the NFU, the Veterinary Laboratory Agency and the Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council (BBSRC), are all contributing to this Met Office led project.

John Gloster, Met Office Research Scientist working at the Institute for Animal Health said: "The arrival of Bluetongue disease in the UK in recent years is evidence that changing climate is already impacting animal health. The Met Office, working with other interested parties, is taking the lead in providing the advice and solutions government, veterinary experts and farmers will need to mitigate against the effects of climate change on animal and plant health in the future."

So far this winter, mild temperatures have dominated the weather, with a distinct lack of prolonged cold conditions. This could provide a taste of what may become an increasingly regular feature of winter climate in the UK having an impact on the types of disease in animals and plants in the future.

Model predictions from the Met Office Hadley Centre show that winters overall are expected to become milder. Head of Climate Change at the Met Office Derrick Ryall said: "The higher temperatures we have been experiencing are very much in line with climate predictions we can expect to experience as the 21st century matures".

More about climate change

Notes

It has been noticeably mild by day through the first part of February. Maximum temperatures have been much higher than you would normally expect. During the rest of the week Met Office forecasts expect it to become cooler as we see a return to temperatures we would normally expect this time of year.

So far this February the highest maximum temperature recorded is 18.2 °C in Trawsgoed. The highest recorded maximum temperature in the UK was 19.7 °C, recorded at Greenwich on 13 February 1998.

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